

2Timothy 24-09-22a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning service here at Grace and Truth Bible Church. We're in the book of 2nd Timothy. We're picking up at chapter 2, verse 1. Chapter 2, verse 1. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study and we will begin.

Father, what a privilege it is for us to spend this time together in fellowship and in the study of your word. We pray that you will bless the time and may the Holy Spirit clarify and illuminate the portion of your word that we look at and bless it to each heart so that as a result of the fellowship and the examination of your word this morning, we will be more thoroughly equipped for every good work. We will see clearly your will in our lives and we can redeem the time and reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus in whose name we pray.

Amen. If we read our passage, you will remember last Sunday we closed chapter 1 with the reference to Onesiphorus who in the midst of stress and many becoming ashamed of their faith and ashamed of Paul as the apostle and communicator of that faith they have fallen away. They have left him and Luke is with him.

Onesiphorus has come from Ephesus to minister to Paul's needs and evidently has then passed away from ill health or some other circumstance so that Paul prays blessing on his household and that God will grant him mercy on that day. The same day that Paul is persuaded God will keep what has been committed to him against that day. So this of course is in the resurrection.

So there is a strong implication that Onesiphorus has gone to glory. But Paul is now going to return here in chapter 2 verse 1 to his exhortation that began back in chapter 1 verse 8, you do not be ashamed. Verse 13, hold fast the pattern and after digressing to talk about those who have faded away and those who have stayed faithful you notice that the fading away group is much larger.

We saw Mr. Fugitive there, Phygelus and we saw son of Mercury there, Hymogenes have left. Others have either forsaken Paul or have been detailed to other assignments. And so you have Titus being sent to Dalmatia and you have Crescens to Galatia and so Paul is asking for some companionship.

Onesiphorus is no longer on the scene so it's just Paul and Luke at this point. Demas has loved the present world and has forsaken Paul. We saw that in chapter 4 verses 9, 10 and 11.

So this morning as we pick up now, Paul is going to return to his primary reason for writing which is to encourage Timothy. And he says, you therefore my son be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. This idea of being strong is something that Paul refers to

time and time again.

He uses here a word called endunomeo. Dunamis is like dynamite and means inside. So be endued and then it says, and this is a little Greek phrase, it's a Greek preposition en and so that's how they've translated it.

Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. But en is a kind of function in Greek that's different than English and it can mean in, by or with. And I personally think that a better translation here and capturing the sense of Paul's sentiment is with.

Try reading this verse again. Look at verse 1 and just change in to with. You therefore my son be strong with the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

That grace that was in the Lord Jesus, comes through the Lord Jesus, was with the Lord Jesus, needs to be in, by and with you. The same grace that enabled and empowered the Lord Jesus to accomplish the will of the Father even to the point of death, the death on the cross and the reason for which God has now highly exalted him and given him the name that is above every name as we read in Philippians 2. The grace of God is available. It is with us.

It can be in us. And this is what gives us the endowment, the enablement, the empowerment to be strong. And Paul uses this in other places.

You can look in chapter 4 to which we referred just moments ago, verse 17. The Lord stood with me and strengthened me at my first defense. The Lord strengthened me.

Paul knows how to access this grace. This is a great thing for us to know how to access. There are times when we feel beat down.

We're discouraged. We're fighting an uphill battle. Our strength is flagging.

Remember, stand up, stand up for Jesus. The arm of flesh will fail you. You dare not trust your own.

So Paul is speaking from experience. He is sharing with Timothy a spiritual skill, which is getting through difficulty and hardship in the strength that comes in by and with the grace that is in Christ Jesus. So he says it in 4.17. We saw it back in 1 Timothy 1.12. Again, you're in the introductory section of that earlier letter.

Paul says, I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who has endunomized me, has enabled me, has strengthened and empowered me. It's the very same word. I thank Christ Jesus who has enabled me.

He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. Of the three members of the Trinity, it is interesting that in these cases, Paul links the grace that brings strength specifically to the Lord Jesus. Why would he do that? Why wouldn't he say, may the

Father give you grace or may the Holy Spirit bestow grace in your soul? Why is it Christ Jesus? What do you think? Who best knows what it is like to be tested in the flesh, to be up against it, to be persecuted, to be ill-received or rejected, to be tired, so tired that you can sleep in the back of the boat through a severe storm that scares sailors into thinking they're going to die, professional fishermen.

The Lord Jesus has walked in our path. He knows what it's like and he knows where the grace is. So Paul consistently links this grace and enablement to the Lord Jesus.

I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord. He's the one who enabled me. He is the one who counted me faithful, faithful enough to be called to this ministry, to fulfill this function.

When we are faithful, when we access God's strength instead of relying on our own, God sees it. The Lord Jesus will give us assignments. Our life has value.

Our sufferings and struggles have purpose. We may not even see what it is, but the Lord Jesus knows. And there is grace to help in time of need.

Remember that? Coming before the throne, come boldly for grace to help in time of need. Notice on down in that same chapter, 1 Timothy 1, 14, the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant with faith and love, which are where? In Christ Jesus. We have a choice when our flesh tempts us to be self-pitying, self-centered, subjective.

And it is to take our eyes off ourselves. And as the wonderful old song says, turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace. The old hymn writers understood their scriptures.

When you turn your eyes on Jesus, other things will shrink to their proper proportion. And looking at him, we receive the grace that is in Christ Jesus, that is with him, and that comes from him. So 1 Timothy 1, 12, and 14, enablement through the grace of Christ Jesus.

You also find this in Ephesians 6, 10. You remember Ephesians 6? This is the full armor of God chapter. You should know where it is.

If you start feeling like you're absorbing slings and arrows and the fiery darts of the skin, Ephesians 6, that's your chapter. Verse 10, finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Same preposition, in, in, by, and with.

Be strong with the Lord, be strong by the Lord, be strong in the Lord, and in, by, and with the enablement, the power of his might. Philippians chapter 4, verse 13. You remember this one? I can do all things through Christ who endued me, who strengthens me.

We look to the Holy Spirit for certain things. Elizabeth and I were discussing the lyrics to

some more recently written songs of praise. And one particular song that was brought to our attention is one that appeals to the Holy Spirit and is basically a prayer to the Holy Spirit.

And I understand this idea, even some old hymns. I was thinking back, could I think of an old hymn where it was more or less addressing personally the Holy Spirit? Uh, and I, the one I could think of is a Holy Ghost with light divine, uh, shine upon this heart of mine. I don't think shine is the right word.

Uh, it's got a beautiful, uh, melody, but Holy Ghost with light divine. And then it, it appeals, but Paul consistently over and over again points to the Lord Jesus. When we need strength, we're aware of the presence and power of God.

That's in our life through the Holy Spirit. We are aware of the plan and purpose of God, the father and his love expressed to us in the Lord Jesus. But specifically and repeatedly in a time where we feel like we're going to fade, look to the Lord Jesus.

He is the visible member of the Trinity. Nobody has seen the father at any time. Holy spirit is like the wind that blows from one direction and goes with her.

We know not. It's the Lord Jesus who is visible. And that visible example of being strengthened by what God supplies, uh, is where we look.

So I can do all things through Christ. The old King James said through Christ, which strengthens me. Uh, but, uh, the new King James cleans that up who strengthens me.

So this is an imperative. Be strong. It's a command.

It's not, if you want to feel better, see if maybe the strength that is in Christ Jesus will help you. Timothy, my son, you be strong. You must do this.

It's not optional. We are commanded to be strong, but not in our own strength. It's in the grace in by and with Christ Jesus.

Now, verse two, the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others. Also, this word means to entrust, commit. You use this kind of vocabulary with things that have great value.

I have my child and I'm going to place them in your care. I'm going to entrust them to you as something of value. And I trust you to honor that, uh, child as I place them into your care, that they're valuable to me.

I expect them to be valuable to you. And they are certainly valuable to the Lord. So these things that you've heard from many witnesses and trust commit to faithful men.

Now you often find in commentaries and in, uh, devotional approaches to this passage

that, uh, and I'll, I'll quote one here. Uh, the, the point of the passage is often construed to be, it is not only a privilege to receive the Christian faith. It is a duty to transmit it.

This is why, uh, conservative Christians, uh, are often labeled themselves and wave the flag of evangelicalism. It is our duty to share the gospel. Uh, I have reviewed in times past occasions where I was pressed to explain when is the last time you shared the gospel with someone? When's the last time you led someone to the Lord? How long has it been since you, uh, accosted an unbeliever and, and, uh, did your Christian sacred duty of transmitting the gospel that you received to them.

And they'll come to this passage and start doing the blood on your hands thing. If there's someone in your periphery and you're reticent and you're ashamed of the gospel and you don't speak up and you think maybe they might not be saved, but you don't corner them somewhere and ask them if they're saved and try to give them the gospel. If they're not, uh, you're not a good Christian.

It is our privilege to receive Christian faith. It is a duty to transmit it says our commentator here, and I will spare them being called out. All Christians must look on themselves as the link between two generations in his commentary, EK Simpson.

This is a guy long gone. Uh, the torch of heavenly light must be transmitted unquenched from one generation to another. Timothy must count himself an intermediary between apostolic and later ages.

That's, that's fine. That's Timothy, but stop and think let's just step back and remember what we've seen in, in our recent studies in the pastoralist, first Timothy, Titus, and now second Timothy. Do you remember that when Paul is talking about the qualifications for an elder, that is an example.

Everyone is not going to be an elder, not going to be an elder, but we should all cultivate those qualities, which are exemplary because there is a call for elders and a description of their qualifications and their characteristics. That doesn't mean all of us should strive to be an elder. There are of the women, the wives that are described in these letters and keeping well a household, a man who is a husband faithful and father of children.

Is there something to matter? If you're not married or you don't have children, these are examples. Everyone doesn't do everything all the time. Same thing here.

This is an exhortation from an apostle to a pastor in the pastor's area of gifting. He is to take this word that has been specifically entrusted to him for communication. He has the communication gift.

He has a communication duty and anyone who has been gifted and called to pastor and to teach and does not faithfully do so, doesn't honor the treasure of the word, the manna from heaven that has been placed in his care, that guy is in trouble. That doesn't mean

that every single believer is to go out and look at it as a duty to evangelize or to preach to other people what we learn in Bible class. It's just not true.

Any more than everyone ought to be an evangelist. Everyone does these things sometimes. And like elders, like wives, those slaves, those masters, there are characteristics and exemplary features that ought to show up when needed.

But Timothy's primary assignment is to teach. So that is what is emphasized here. But most of us as believers don't have that assignment.

A few of us do. Most of us don't. If there is an opportunity that God, the Holy Spirit orchestrates, and he brings us into contact with someone with whom he has already been dealing, the ground is already plowed, the rocks have been moved out of the way, and it is our privilege to speak the truth in love and plant a seed either for salvation or for growth and moving closer to God by our Christian fellowship, that's great.

Every Marine is a rifleman, but your logistics people, your intelligence people, your pilots, your motor transport people, everyone knows how to do a wide range of skills, but we specialize. And nobody would go to a guy in the motor park or a guy in the commissary or a pilot and say, when's the last time you whipped your weapon out and put bullets down range? Marines are here to attack and perforate the enemy and find whatever is in the area and destroy it. I am capable if necessary.

If I found myself unusually out of my primary calling, I am ready, willing, and able to do so. But I'm not a bad Marine if I'm not in a rifle platoon. I'm not a bad Marine if I'm not firing the 155mm gun on a tank or a howitzer in an artillery battery.

We specialize, and nobody should feel bad because, well, I haven't shared the gospel with anyone and fill in the blank. We are to be led by the Holy Spirit and to go where He takes us to speak the words that He gives us. And not all of us are evangelists all the time.

Not all of us are called to take a committed trust of doctrinal truth and find faithful people who will teach it. It's kind of obvious when you pause to look at it, but this passage and others like it are often made to actually have the opposite effect on us as believers. Instead of being encouraged, instead of being motivated, instead of being confident in the strengthening that comes from the grace that is in Christ Jesus, we wind up having a spiritual inferiority complex, or a sense of inadequacy, or searching ourselves to see what's the matter with me? Why am I not winning souls? And it's tragic.

This is an example. We are to be sensitive to the grace that is in Christ Jesus as it strengthens us for our task. Maybe we're just parents of children.

I say just. That's one of the greatest things anyone can do. Maybe you are in a fellowship of believers and you have a unique opportunity to pray, to support, to encourage, to do

other things.

And this is where God has placed us. This is how God has gifted us. This is the opportunity that God has placed before us.

And to be faithful in our primary assignment. You could pick up a that a light colonel writes to a nephew who is in the service. And the colonel commands infantry.

And his nephew is also in the infantry. And he says, remember your basics. Remember tactics.

Remember strategy. Remember interlocking fields of fire. Remember areas of responsibility.

Remember to lean on your supporting arms. Don't forget communications. They're talking the language of infantry.

Paul and Timothy here are talking the language of formal communication to the body of Christ. Well, some other nephew of that same colonel, he's working in the mess decks. He's in supply and logistics.

And he gets a copy of this letter and he says, what's the matter with me? I'm not out there putting rounds down range. What would a smart young man do? The same level of dedication of attention to detail of knowing where the resources are and how to employ them and to be inspired by the example of one kind of effort. This is what we've been seeing all through these pastoral epistles.

Be inspired by what the elders are called to do. Be inspired by what the widows are called to do. What the younger women are called to do.

You don't have to be a younger woman or a widow or an elder or any of these other things because there are common principles and common provisions from God that enable and empower all the areas. Paul can't go down the list of every single thing that anybody might be doing. So these are representative.

So when you read this, don't panic and say, I've got to grab a Bible in a pocket full of tracts and go start knocking on doors. Or I need to look around in my periphery and find somebody that needs Bible class and go give them one. Notice that Paul's emphasis to Timothy is, Timothy, you need to be strong.

You first be strong. If you are strong, you will be enabled and properly guided to help others. Remember what they tell you when you fly on an airplane? I assume they still do this.

I've successfully avoided airlines now for some years and I am none the worse for it. But last time I flew on a plane, the stewardess gets up there and they've got that fake seat

belt that plugs into itself. And you think, really? You've got to explain how to put tab A into slot B. Everybody drives a car that's got the identical technology.

But what else do they say? In the event of cabin depressurization, an oxygen mask will drop from the overhead compartment. If you are sitting with children or those who are less able, put yours on first, then put theirs on. You remember this? Why is that? Why do they say put your own? Well, that's so selfish.

I've got three kids sitting here next to me. This one and they're squirming and this one's crying and this one's got so much slick stuff on their face, I can't get the mask to stay. It keeps popping off.

What happens? You can pass out from lack of oxygen in your effort to help someone else when you have not first ensured that you are squared away. And that's what Paul is telling Timothy here. You've got to be strong in, by and with the grace that is in, by and with Christ Jesus.

Then the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, you entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. And they are going to need to do the same thing. They are going to need to do the same thing.

And that is, first of all, pay attention to their own spiritual growth, their own relationship with God through Jesus Christ in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. That has to come first. And if we become unduly concerned with the political landscape, with international events, with how this is affecting our nation or our family or our coworkers or our fellow students or those with whom we rub elbows and we become concerned at their situation, we must stop and ensure that we have first dealt with our own situation.

Am I stable? Am I confident? Is my faith aimed in the right direction? Am I strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus? You can't help someone else when you yourself are not strong enough to do so. Drowning people, got to be really careful. You could be an excellent swimmer, but many excellent swimmers have been drowned by panicked victims that they are trying to help and trying to save.

Because if you don't know what you're doing, you can be drowned yourself in an effort to save someone else. So this order is important. The first priority, we talk a lot about Christian thinking in terms of goals, values, and priorities.

The priority is, first of all, for me to be strong. If I don't evaluate myself to be strong at the moment, the last thing I need to do is be busying myself with the needs of others. I need to, first of all, take care of myself.

Young ladies who have children, babies, and toddlers understand that they're going to do a bad job of caring for those children if they don't eat, if they don't sleep, if they don't arrange to take a break from time to time and have someone else intervene and put a

shoulder under the load, hopefully the husband, possibly a mother, grandmother, someone nearby, a babysitter, but to sustain your own strength so that you don't do a bad job caring for others. So again, this is emblematic. It makes sense when you look at it that way, doesn't it? That Paul is talking to Timothy about his teaching and preaching responsibilities, but this principle of being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus and knowing how to do that is a life skill for every believer and a priority.

First and foremost, be strong. Then you can work with others and they will be able to teach others also. So now look at verse three, you therefore must endure hardships.

You must share is an alternate text there, but you are to be faithful and you are to share in. Remember, no testing has befallen you, but such as is common. The Lord Jesus was tested in all points like as we are.

Both things are true. Hardship is something that we are not ejected out of with the push of a button and float gently to the ground on a parachute. Most of the time we have to work through hardship.

We're not delivered from it, we are delivered through it. And so we endure it, but it is helpful and aids objectivity to recognize that it is common to man and God is aware of it and God provides resources to deal with it. So we share in hardship as a good soldier.

We're going to pause here and take our break. When we come back, Paul is going to go to three metaphors and he uses these more than once. It is the soldier, it is the athlete, and it is the farmer.

And they come in quick succession so quick that it turns our head around a little bit that a soldier is conscripted in many cases and he's in a fight. An athlete, this is more optional and you're competing for the glory of race or winning the prize. And then a farmer, he's got a long-term endeavor.

He's got to work through the season to plant the seed, weed, protect, water, cultivate, and expect a crop down the road. So why these three? And we'll find that Paul does this in more than one place. He combines these three examples in Corinthians.

To what purpose? What do we take away from that? That's what we'll look at when we come back from the break.